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E. L. STROTHER. STROTHER & LITTS,

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"Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me."

Thoughtlessly the maiden sung, Fell the words unconsciously,
From her girlish, gleeful tongue,
Sang as little children sing;
Sang as sing the birds in June;
Fell the words like light leaves down On the current of the tune— Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee." How much pathos is expressed in those words? They may express the feelings of an agonized heart, of a heart grown weary with life's burdens, or a heart ripe with Christ's love.

"Thoughlessly the maiden sung, Fell the words unconsciously, From her girlish, gleeful tongue."

The maiden sang them as she looked on life, on the world and things of the world. All is bright, rosy and joyful, what few clouds obscure the sun are "silver lined" and "golden tinted," things of a moment, shadows of a sunny sun, shadows that before her tripping youthful feet are like fairy phantoms.

"Or like the borealis race, That flit ere you can point their place." The prophetic taste of bitterness that will be partaken of in after years. Aye, "the bitter cup of death" is quickly dispelled to sip the dews of youthful pouyancy, of youthful pleasures, of youthful sweets. Such giddy lips should no more sing those pleading, almost sacred, words than He who reigns in the place of eternal death could sing,

My faith looks up to thee; Thou Lamb of calvary, Savior divine " That Savior he so sorely tempted on the

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me-Twas a woman sang them now, Rose the song as storm tossed birds Beats with weary wings the air Every note with sorrow stirred— Every syllable a prayer— Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee."

Words breathed, sang, uttered by trembling lips, pitiful lips, lips that have tasted the bitter dregs of misery, of woe, of despair; heart so heavy, broken and shattered that there is scarcely beating to throb forth to a cold pitiless world her cry of anguish, her plea for rest, for refuge. The echos of the past, the days of feverish youth may have heard those lips sing the words,

"As sings the birds in June." But now it is like the dreary moan of a winter wind sighing amidst the wreck of blasted hopes,

"Every syllable a prayer." Praying for the freedom of the soul, and rest for the body that has held the soul a captive, a captive from heaven, from heavens joys, from heaven's sweet home, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me"-Lips grown aged sung the hymn Trustingly and tenderly, Voice grown weak and eyes grown dim, Let me hide myself in Thee. Trembling though the voice and low, Ran the sweet strain peacefully, Like a river in its flow, Sung as only they can sing Who life's thorny paths have pressed; Sung as only they can sing Who behold the promised rest— Rock of Ages, cleft for me, "Let me hide myself in Thee.

"Lips grown aged sung the hymn," lips that had partaken of life's pleasures and life's sorrows smiled with joy and trembled in anguish now murmured "trustingly and tenderly" for a haven of rest, "Trustingly" then surely with faith, "whosoever peleiveth in me shall never die." Though the voice was low and trembling it was wafted to heaven on Faith's bright wings, and when mortality freed the soul, feet that had pressed life's thorny paths, pressed the Golden streets and the "promised rest" was "in my Father's mansions," and "eyes grown dim" shone with a heavenly light, Faith rewarded. Home at last.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Sang above a coffin lid; Underneath, all restfully All life's joys and sorrows hid. Nevermore, O storm tossed soul! Nevermore from wind or tide, Nevermore from billows roll, Wilt thou need to hide.
Could the sightless, sunken eyes,
Closed beneath the soft gray hair,
Could the mute and stinened lips
Move again in pleading prayer,
Still, aye, still the words would be
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Sang above a coffin lid," sang by those who felt, that though the dear form that lay beneath the coffin lid had sank in the arms of death. The immortal soul was in the arms of the Redeemer. "All life's joys and sorrows hid." But the glorious exchange, ineffiable and eternal happiness above. No longer tossed by "wind or tide" or "billows roll."

"We know she is safe on the farther side Where all the ransomed and angels be."

The sightless and sunken eyes will open to behold those gone before. The mute and stiffened lips will sing sweet anthems with the Heavenly throng.

"Rock of Ages cleft for me." Let the grand old hymn be only sung by those whose lives are in need of solace, of pure sympathy, of comfort from Him who said "come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

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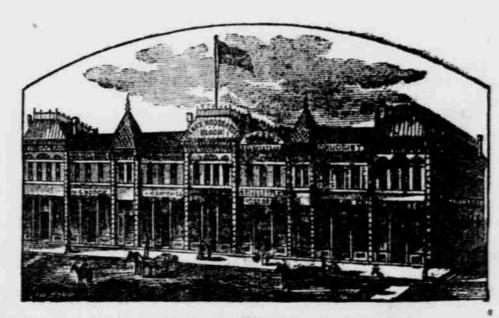
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